CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline for abstract submission extended to August 10!

The Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Novi Sad, Summa Studiorum Philosophiae, and GEM (Gender Equality in Mobilization) project invite you to participate in an international symposium for young people, which will take place **14-17 September 2026** at the **Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad**.

GEM[1] is an international project bringing together partners from the region with the aim of empowering young people and encouraging their more active participation in education and society. The project places particular emphasis on **education as a key space for change**, through topics such as gender equality, stigma, political participation, and contemporary challenges faced by young people in the context of the Western Balkans. As a project partner, the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad is especially pleased to contribute to the understanding of the **historical and contemporary position of women**, in dialogue with European values and educational policies, through an interdisciplinary and philosophical approach.

As part of the project, we are organizing the **GEM Summer Summit** symposium, bringing together university students, high school students, young researchers, and activists from the region (up to 35 years of age). The theme of the symposium is:

WOMAN – STIGMA, IDENTITY AND EMANCIPATION

The program is conceived as an educational-research and creative space, structured through four interconnected sections:

- **scientific and research work**, with topics connecting women, education, law, politics, philosophy, art, and contemporary social challenges;
- **deconstruction of narratives**, through the analysis of film, myth, literature, culture, and contemporary discourses, with the aim of questioning the ways women have been represented in different social and historical contexts;

[1] Project GEM (101252645 — GEM — CITIZENS-CIV) is co-funded by the European Union – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

- **reconstruction of experience**, through personal, family, and transgenerational testimonies about the position of women, experiences of education, labor, activism, discrimination, and social change;
- **construction of expression**, through storytelling, personal narratives, and the development of an authentic voice in creative practices and various forms of artistic and media expression.

Particular emphasis will be placed on philosophical analyses connecting tradition and the contemporary world, in order to help participants better understand the position of women between personal experiences, social circumstances, and European policies. To apply for the symposium, applicants are required to choose one of the four thematic sections and submit their application in accordance with the guidelines for that section.

The symposium is organized within the framework of the international student conference *Summa Studiorum Philosophiae*, which has traditionally addressed interdisciplinary topics in humanities and social sciences. This year's edition of the conference will be the eighth in a row and is intended for undergraduate and master's students of philosophy, as well as related humanities and social science disciplines, organized by the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad.

Over the previous years, a series of conferences has been successfully organized: *The Legacy of Idealism* (2017), *Materialism* (2018), *Philosophy and Emotions* (2019), *Philosophy and Art* (2021, online edition), *Philosophy and New Media* (2022), *Philosophy and Conditio Humana* (2023), and *The Philosophy of the Question* (2024).

The conferences have brought together students and young researchers from the region, including participants from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Greece, and Poland, encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue, international cooperation, and the exchange of diverse philosophical and social perspectives. We hope you will find your interests reflected in one of the following sections:

1) SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH WORK

The **scientific and research segment** is conceived interdisciplinarily and encourages participants to reflect, through **philosophical, humanistic, cultural, media, legal, and social discourse**, on issues concerning the position of women, identity, stigma, and emancipation.

Throughout history, the question of woman has often been posed as the question of **the Other** – from phenomenological, Marxist, materialist, psychoanalytic, and contemporary feminist perspectives. Women have simultaneously been idealized and marginalized throughout history: represented as saints, mothers, muses, or symbols of nature, while also being confined to the spheres of labor, reproduction, privacy, and social invisibility. Even major philosophical systems often maintained an ambivalent attitude toward women – from ancient conceptions in **Plato** and **Aristotle**, through modern projects of education and society, to contemporary debates about the body, language, identity, and power.

At the same time, the history of philosophy and social thought also recognizes authors and thinkers who fought for women's emancipation and their right to education, political

participation, and social equality – from **Mary Wollstonecraft** and **John Stuart Mill** to contemporary feminist and critical theories.

Ideas of the Enlightenment, the development of the modern university, and the question of women's place within the European tradition of law, democracy, and education are also of particular importance for the contemporary understanding of education, culture, and European society. In this context, **Humboldt's university reform** is especially significant, having shaped the **contemporary European educational model** based on the autonomy of knowledge, research, and the idea of education as a space of freedom and personal formation. Contemporary European policies further raise questions of gender equality, representation, women's participation in public life, and the relationship between identity, rights, and democratic culture.

The contemporary digital and media age additionally problematizes questions of **language, representation, identity, the body, and new forms of alienation** through the theoretical approaches of authors such as **Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Donna Haraway, bell hooks, Sara Ahme**d, and other contemporary philosophers and theorists of culture, media, and language.

Participants are expected to present, through a short academic abstract, the problem they wish to address, the main research questions, the theoretical or methodological approach, as well as the possible contribution to the contemporary understanding of women's position in the context of education, politics, culture, media, and social change. **Interdisciplinary approaches** connecting philosophy with literature, art, media, sociology, politics, law, and contemporary culture are especially encouraged.

Submissions for the **"Scientific and Research Work"** section should include **a short abstract in English (up to 400 words) in Word format (.docx)**, presenting the topic, main research questions, theoretical and methodological approach, and possible contribution to the contemporary understanding of women's position in the context of education, politics, culture, media, and social change. Presentations and discussions during the symposium may also take place in the languages of our region, in accordance with the regional character of the event and the mutual linguistic proximity of participants.

Abstract submission form

2) DECONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVES

Whether in prose, poetry, sound, image, or structure, works of art often contain ideas that transcend their obvious message, and sometimes even what the author themselves intended to express. Precisely for this reason, art can become a space in which voices that would otherwise remain unheard gain expression, as well as a means of questioning established hierarchies of power.

Have you ever encountered a literary, cinematic, or other narrative work that made you think more deeply about what it means to be a woman? About the visible and invisible challenges women face today or throughout history? About the ways in which women have been represented, treated, or suppressed? It is precisely from such questions that the Deconstruction of Narratives section within the international GEM symposium emerged.

We invite young participants interested in exchanging ideas and new interpretations of feminist motifs (or their absence) in various narratives – from ancient myths and classical literature to contemporary film and popular culture. Experienced theorists will also participate in the section, helping participants develop and articulate their interpretations and arguments more clearly.

Participants may analyze various media and genres: myths, legends, novels, dramas, poetry, films, and other artistic forms, provided they offer a clearly reasoned interpretation.

You may choose works that explicitly address women's issues, such as ***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood**, which explores patriarchal repression and women's reproductive rights. Perhaps you are more interested in figures such as **Antigone** and **Medea**, or representations of powerful female communities such as the **Bene Gesserit** from the ***Dune*** universe or the **Aes Sedai** from ***The Wheel of Time***. You may also raise questions of women's representation through an analysis of the **Bechdel Test**, frequently used in the study of female characters in fiction.

On the other hand, you may wish to offer a feminist interpretation of works that do not appear explicitly feminist at first glance. Samuel Beckett's ***Waiting for Godot***, for instance, is known for the near-total absence of female characters. Does this absence itself convey something? When women are present in narratives, are they represented equally? Why are evil stepmothers so common in fairy tales, but not stepfathers? Does the author's gender influence the way we interpret a work?

These are only some of the questions open for discussion within the Deconstruction of Narratives section of the international GEM Summit.

Submissions for the **"Deconstruction of Narratives"** section should include a proposed topic and a short **abstract in English (up to 400 words) in Word format (.docx)**, describing the work you wish to analyze and the interpretative perspective you intend to adopt, along with sufficient background information so that participants unfamiliar with the work can still follow your interpretation. Presentations and discussions during the symposium may also take place in the languages of our region, in accordance with the regional character of the event and the mutual linguistic proximity of participants.

Abstract submission form

3) RECONSTRUCTION OF EXPERIENCE

We invite you to share, through storytelling, conversation, interviews, or other creative testimony, the experiences of women whose lives, decisions, struggles, and everyday realities have shaped your worldview.

Your presentation may be developed within one of the following thematic units:

"Let me tell you a story"

If you have personal experience with activism, social engagement, or confronting various forms of discrimination and obstacles, we invite you to share your story with us. We are interested in experiences that open questions about the position of women today, the ways

obstacles are recognized and overcome, and the possibilities for greater inclusion of young women in social and public life.

"From generation to generation"

Family stories often preserve women's experiences that remain invisible in official history. If you wish, you may present stories about your mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, neighbors, or family friends, and demonstrate how different generations of women experienced education, labor, family life, social change, and political participation. We are especially interested in how these experiences shaped your understanding of female identity and the position of women today.

"A thousand questions, a thousand answers"

If you do not have personal or family experience connected to activism, but are interested in women's voices that are rarely heard, you may design an interview or short research project based on conversations with different women. The goal is to collect and present their experiences, identify common patterns, and open space for discussion about the contemporary challenges women face.

Submissions for the **"Reconstruction of experience"** section should include a description of the experience you wish to present and a short **abstract in English (up to 400 words) in Word format (.docx)**. If you believe your idea does not fully fit into any of the proposed categories or connects several of them, feel free to contact us – we would be happy to help shape your submission together. Presentations and discussions during the symposium may also take place in the languages of our region, in accordance with the regional character of the event and the mutual linguistic proximity of participants.

Abstract submission form

4) CONSTRUCTION OF EXPRESSION

In addition to the scientific and interpretative segments of the program, the international GEM symposium also includes a special artistic and creative segment dedicated to authentic expression through various forms of verbal art. This part of the program is conceived as a space for free and creative reflection on themes of identity, women's experience, stigma, emancipation, and contemporary social challenges.

Participants may contribute to the program through:

- prose,
- poetry,
- philosophical or literary essays,
- mini screenplays,
- short dramatic texts,
- as well as hybrid, experimental, and interdisciplinary forms of writing.

The theme of the artistic segment follows the general framework of the symposium – *Woman: Stigma, Identity, and Emancipation* – while participants are given complete freedom in their choice of poetics, genre, and approach. Special emphasis will be placed on literature and art

as spaces of freedom, imagination, critical thinking, and the development of an authentic voice.

Submissions for the **"Construction of Expression"** section may include **short prose, essays, mini screenplays, or short dramatic texts up to 5–6 pages in length**, as well as **poetry** (individual poems or a short poem cycle) totaling **up to 3 pages**. Materials should be submitted in Word format (.docx). Texts may be written **in Serbian or English**. Presentations and discussions during the Summit may also take place in the languages of our region, in accordance with the regional character of the event and the mutual linguistic proximity of participants.

Abstract submission form

Note: In addition to the scientific, research, and creative aspects of the program, participants will also have the opportunity to connect through additional activities such as a **shadowing program**, a **PhotoVoice exhibition**, and other accompanying events to be organized during the conference itself. After the Summit, participants will have the opportunity to further develop their papers and presentations in cooperation with mentors, while selected works will be published in the **conference proceedings**. More detailed information about these activities and the application process will be made available to participants at a later stage.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/GyXrBTxswyXarbMs6

The symposium will take place **14–17 September 2026** at the **Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad (Serbia)**.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Submission of abstracts: 1 August 2026
- Notification of acceptance: 15 August 2026

For more information about the project, you may contact:
Doc. dr Tanja Todorović, project coordinator at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad: tanja.todorovic@ff.uns.ac.rs

or visit the websites:
https://www.ff.uns.ac.rs/sr/nauka/projekti/medjunarodni-projekti
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251589/101252645/CERV

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdgLLC-f5yKyRGNMa0tE7t3rfMLCLo0LvqAw3JLhbV5Urqvkw/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=115166105430729125201